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IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 1-17 and add new claims 18-36 in accordance with the following listing showing the status of all claims in the application.

1-17 (Canceled)

18. (New) A system for sharing contact information, said system comprising:

- (a) a central hub that maintains and distributes contact information;
- (b) plural terminals that electronically communicate with the central hub; and
- (c) plural contacts, each said contact having an associated contact record that is

maintained by the central hub,

wherein upon receipt of a contact-record request from one of the plural terminals, the central hub automatically transmits a matching contact record to the requesting terminal, and

wherein each of the plural terminals has an ability to retrieve any of the contact records maintained by the central hub for said plural contacts, but the central hub implements procedures to preclude mass downloading of contact information.

19. (New) A system according to claim 18, wherein the central hub permits the contacts to limit fields in their corresponding contact records which may be searched in response to contact-record requests from the plural terminals.

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20. (New) A system according to claim 18, wherein said procedures to preclude mass downloading of contact information include limiting a number of contact records that may be downloaded by each end user.

21. (New) A system according to claim 18, wherein said procedures to preclude mass downloading of contact information include limiting a number of matching contact records provided to each requesting end user.

22. (New) A system according to claim 18, wherein said procedures to preclude mass downloading of contact information include monitoring and restricting repeated broad searches conducted by a same end user.

23. (New) A system according to claim 18, wherein said procedures to preclude mass downloading of contact information include monitoring and restricting repeated similar broad searches conducted across multiple end users.

24. (New) A system according to claim 18, wherein said procedures to preclude mass downloading of contact information include correlating reports of junk email from the contacts with broad searches conducted by registered end users.

25. (New) A system according to claim 18, wherein the central hub requires the contact-record request to include identity-confirming information, in addition to a unique

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identification code that uniquely identifies the matching contact record, in order to retrieve the matching contact record.

26. (New) A system according to claim 25, wherein the identity-confirming information comprises additional contact information for a contact corresponding to the contact-record request.

27. (New) A system according to claim 25, wherein the central hub cuts off an end user for having too many invalid contact-record requests.

28. (New) A system according to claim 25, wherein the identity-confirming information verifies that the contact-record request corresponds to a valid contact record.

29. (New) A system according to claim 18, wherein each of the contacts is provided with an ability to make the associated contact record for said contact available through general search queries.

30. (New) A system according to claim 18, wherein the matching contact record includes plural different contact information fields and is in a format that permits unambiguous identification of said plural different contact information fields upon application of pre-specified mechanical rules.

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31. (New) A system according to claim 18, wherein a format in which the matching contact record is transmitted from the central hub to the requesting terminal is selected by the central hub based on a preference expressed by the user.

32. (New) A system according to claim 18, wherein in response to the contact-record request the central hub transmits plural matching contact records to the requesting terminal.

33. (New) A system according to claim 18, wherein the central hub records identities end users that have stored a particular contact record and notifies at least some of said end users when the particular contact record subsequently is modified.

34. (New) A system according to claim 18, wherein upon receipt of the matching contact record by the requesting terminal, the matching contact record automatically is displayed in a manner so as to allow a user of the requesting terminal to edit individual information fields within the matching contact record prior to causing the matching contact record to be stored into an electronic address book of the requesting terminal.

35. (New) A system according to claim 18, wherein upon receipt of the matching contact record by the requesting terminal, the matching contact record automatically is stored into an electronic address book of the requesting terminal.

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36. (New) A system according to claim 18, wherein the contact-record request is initiated by, and the matching contact record is received by, an electronic address book program running on the requesting terminal.